

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2307

<http://coleman.senate.gov>

9 March 2006

Don Hultman  
Refuge Manager, Upper Mississippi River NW&FR  
Attn: CCP Comment, Room 101  
51 East Fourth Street  
Winona, MN 55987

Dear Don,

Please accept my commendations for your work in developing, presenting, listening, modifying and ultimately deciding upon an updated comprehensive plan for the Upper Mississippi Refuge. Managing natural resources is a challenge under any condition. Managing the most widely visited refuge in the system makes this challenge all the more complex.

You have shown great patience and diligence throughout your public hearing tour and I appreciate your efforts.

As for your preferred Alternative E, I would like to add my thoughts as you prepare to make a decision. Two aspects of the plan concern me:

1 – Hunting Access. I am concerned that hunting opportunities for Minnesota hunters may be unfairly eliminated. While the overall acreage open to public hunting may remain stable or grow in some areas of the refuge, I am concerned that the closure of areas like Big Lake near Wabasha unfairly penalizes Minnesota waterfowlers. I encourage you to pay particular attention to providing replacement hunting opportunities of comparable quality near where you propose closing existing hunting areas.

2 – Proposed Restriction to Specific Watercraft/Motor Use. I am concerned about the various proposals to restrict areas of the refuge to particular types of watercraft. While I feel it is reasonable to regulate how equipment is used, I do not favor banning use by a specific type of watercraft or propulsion type.

I understand the mission to protect habitat and I believe efforts to reduce erosion are laudable. I also am aware of safety concerns brought on by any interaction between users of different class watercraft. However, I believe that no wake zones, no wake areas or seasonal restrictions should merit consideration as a means to minimize boater conflict, protect habitat and sufficiently assist in preventing riverbank erosion prior to banning particular watercraft from areas of the river.

I hope my thoughts are helpful as you undergo final deliberation of this Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for your service to the Upper Mississippi and the citizens who make the river an integral part of their lives.

Best Regards,

  
US Senator Norm Coleman

3078  
COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
CHAIRMAN  
PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
CHAIRMAN  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WESTERN HEMISPHERE, PEACE CORPS, AND NARCOTICS AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE ON  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP